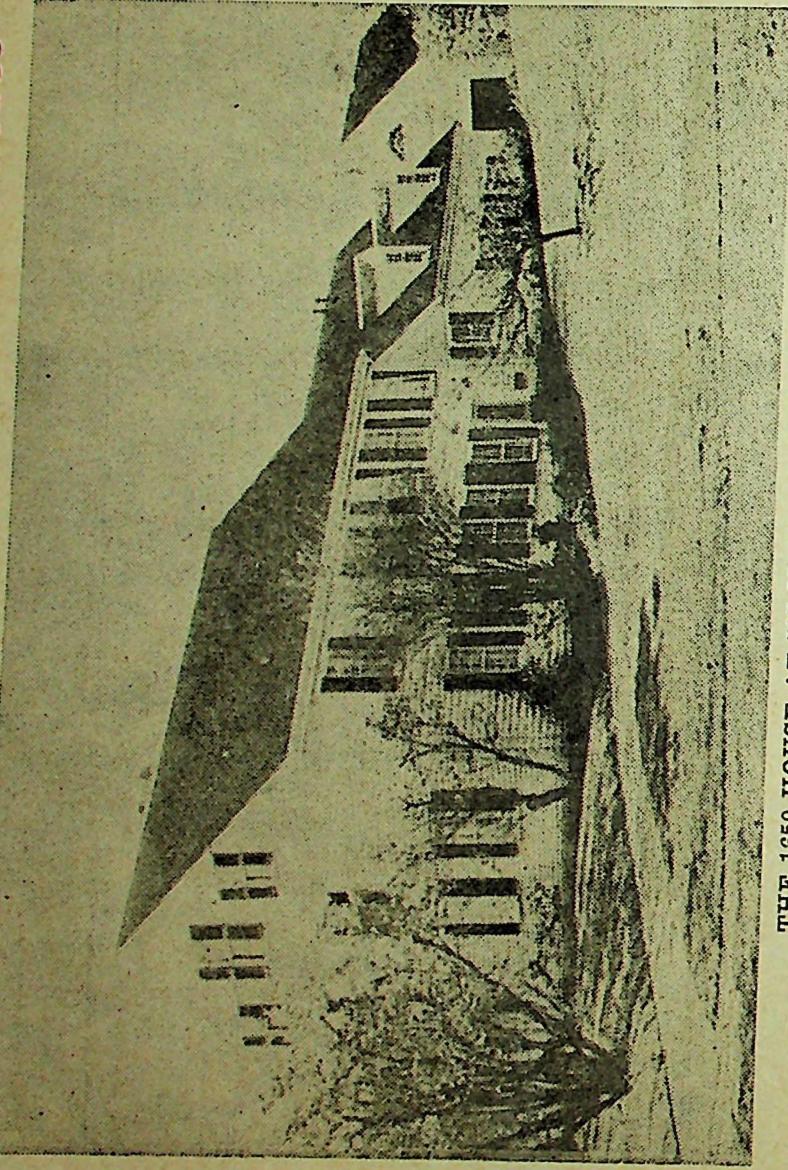


# Ancient Mariner, 'Cap'n Bill', Reminiscences



THE 1650 HOUSE AT 597 MAIN STREET, HINGHAM

## OLD SCITUATE HERITAGE by William 'Cap'n Bill' Vinal

Joshua Wilder and Elijah Damon  
Agreement to  
"Build me a House and Barn  
at Hingham, August 14, 1816"

I, Joshua Wilder agree to furnish  
a tall clock to Elijah Damon the  
one in my hall upon the comple-  
tion of a house and barn on my  
lot in Hingham and to furnish  
the following articles for its con-  
struction: Brick 1200, Lime 4  
barls, all lumber except for  
frain, all florng, all shingels,  
everything needed for the con-  
struction of a noble house and  
to be in a work man like man-  
ner. Nails, dowels, hardware to  
be extray.

You to furnish all labor & to  
but only such extray work as it  
not anticipate at present. You  
to receive \$1.25 per day for  
extray work & Daniel 50c. J. W.  
Outside doors & frains & all win-  
dows to have 1 coat before in-  
stalling.

I agree to above

All work extray I will pay for.  
Hare to be furnished by me J.W.  
NOTES: This is an amazing docu-  
ment Elijah is to enjoy the tick-  
ing of a grandfather clock made  
by the inventive genuinty of Josh-  
ua Wilder. A Wilder grandfather  
clock today is valued at consider-  
able over \$1000. Clock linkers use  
to travel the Scituate country-  
side plying their trade. We are  
waiting for a clock mender at the  
present time, but probably in  
vain. That Wilder clocks tick to-  
day is a great testimony to hon-  
est skilful workmanship.

It would be of great interest,  
nearly a hundred and forty years  
ago, to have listened to Joshua  
and Elijah addressing each other  
about additions to the agreement,  
especially when Elijah said "How  
can I keep that clock a going: I  
pray that, out of your great skill,  
you will fix it." Quoth Joshua,  
the Quaker, who knew the me-  
chanical durability of the con-  
trapton: "I will go a leetle fur-  
ther, and keep ye clock in repair  
forever." The use of the word  
"drawer" is of interest. Phonetic-  
ally it probably referred to draft  
or draught. The word draw must  
have an interesting history. We  
draw out in speech, the calf  
draws a cow dry, we draw (evi-  
cate) fowl, we play draw games,  
etc. Elijah and Joshua under-  
stood each other when they  
agreed to make the chimney  
"drawer."

WHO WAS JOSHUA WILDER?

Joshua Wilder (Dec. 1786-d.  
Oct. 3, 1869), a contemporary of  
Elijah Damon, was the fifth gen-  
eration of Wilders in Hingham.  
Edward Wilder, the original set-  
tler, received a grant of 10 acr.  
in 1637. He also owned land be-  
tween Town's Bridge and Wilder's  
Bridge on Main Street, South  
Hingham—December 1, 1675, Ed-  
ward was one of sixteen Hingham  
soldiers in King Philip's War. Ed-  
ward died October 18, 1690.

Joshua Wilder was one of twenty  
children, all born in the same  
house.\* His ancestors were farm-  
ers. His father Edward, was Cap-  
tain of a military company. Josh-  
ua Wilder was an apprentice to  
John and Calvin Bayley of Han-  
over. He concluded his apprenticeship  
in about 1807. In 1812 he mar-  
ried Judith Shearman. They  
had seven children. Ezra, born in  
1818

E. D. I will build the shettters at my ex-  
pense. E. D. I will finish the house by June  
1, 1817 I will finish the barn by Jan. 1.  
1818

I will have a cellar for manure  
dug & stoned under the barn  
168 x 10' at my expense J. W.  
I will pay to \$20 haulage barn  
frain I will pay up to 24 weeks board  
xtry for barn work J. W.  
I to build a wood sink J. W.

Joshua sold Elijah one wall clock  
for \$35.00. July 31, 1831 he rented  
Elijah a watch, — "Rental of a  
man's watch for 9 months."

According to a deed, Edward  
Wilder of Hingham in considera-  
tion of \$248 sold "A pease of  
land on the southeast corner of  
My Home land with a shop stand-  
ing their on bounded as follows:  
Beginning at the South east cor-  
ner of the shop and running with  
the shop and fence westerly six  
rods fourteen feet & 3 inches to  
the Southeast corner of the  
school house" etc. This was  
signed 13 February, 1812.

Another document of interest  
is as follows: "Know All Men  
by These Presents, that we Allen  
Cushing Housewright and Laban  
Cushing Hatter, both of Hingham,  
in Consideration of \$310 paid by  
Joshua Wilder of Hingham afore-  
said Clock & Watchmaker convey  
unto the said Joshua Wilder his  
heirs and assigns forever the  
Building to the underpinning  
lately owned and occupied as a  
store by Seth Cushing Jr de-  
ceased standing at the southwest-  
erly corner of the late Home-  
stead of said deceased, with the  
appurtenances, subject however  
to the following conditions. Viz  
the Building aforesaid shall be  
removed off the premises where  
it now stands in fifty days from  
the date hereof: June 7th 1830.

Book 169 folio 72 P.v. Cotton Regr.  
Joshua or "Quaker" Wilder had  
his shop at what is now 605 Main  
Street, South Hingham, between  
Friend and High Streets, and  
next door to the store. The Cape  
Cod house is now occupied by  
Mrs. Wilder, widow of Fred S.  
Wilder, and a great grandson of  
Joshua.

Less than a month before pas-  
sing away, Joshua sold to Ezra,  
his son, all tools and equipment  
for "five dollars and other good  
services." This Bill of Sale is of  
interest in that it shows what a  
clock artisan of that day posses-  
sed: "All tools — Engines —  
Latines — Files — Forging or  
Smithing and Cabinet or Carpen-  
ters tools and Grindstones in or  
about the shop that he now oc-  
cupies, and also my timepiece reg-  
ulator in said shop & all partially  
manufactured "Clock" work, or  
other manufactured material of  
every name or nature now owned  
by me in said shop — including  
Watch, mainsprings, Hands keys  
&c. — with all of my old second  
hand watches whether at this  
time at my home, or lent, or hired  
out abroad" — So Hingham Sept.  
10th 1860. Joshua's shop was  
moved across the street in about  
1904.

It has been of interest to note  
that Joshua was a Quaker. Also  
that he made wooden clocks and  
ship on Public Schools.

NOTES: These items about Josh-  
ua Wilder show one discovery  
leads to another. That Joshua  
which his children were born and  
he died, was built in 1816 by  
Elijah Damon. We have already  
seen that Elijah was paid in part  
"by a tall clock." On July 1, 1820

Hingham and Scituate were  
self-sufficient communities. They  
depended on local talent. They  
sometimes crossed the line for  
"ingenuity." Hingham had a pop-  
ulation of 2500 at this time and  
their own blacksmiths, shoemak-  
ers, tanners, millers, house-  
wrights, and batters. Joshua Wil-  
der was a man of ingenuity.

\* The "1650 House" at 597 Main  
Street, Hingham.

and that his "Baby Grandfather  
Clocks", have recently sold for